

Senior and Disabled Tax Relief Committee Meeting
2nd Floor Conference Room, Sullivan Independence Hall
Minutes for September 25, 2014

Present: Tom McCarthy, Ruth Smey, and Carol Way
Guest: Donald Ross

I. Call to Order:

Chairman Tom McCarthy called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. The committee began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Review of Estimated Participants and Costs of Program vs. the Actual Finalized Figures for 2014

The Committee reviewed the actual finalized figures that had been provided by Tax Assessor Don Ross. With the newness of the program, it had been hard to estimate how many would take advantage of the revised, and in many cases, enhanced tax relief program. We definitely did not have the increases in participants and in dollar relief that we had thought might happen. Even though the deferral program had been made more desirable in many ways, the number of participants had actually declined. There is definitely an aversion to having a lien placed on seniors' properties. Moving to biennial application process may have been a bit confusing to participants, also. The prospect of better and more varied ways of publicizing the program was still seen as a goal for future years.

Several comments were shared by Palma Senatore:

- Could it be named something other than "relief"; the word is rather demeaning (a welfare connotation)?
- Please recommend that future committees review, and hopefully raise, the asset level that is acceptable.
- Consider again some kind of "homestead credit" or freeze of taxes if you have paid real estate taxes for a certain number of years (20?) and you have now reached a certain senior age (70?).

III. Proposed Action for Change to Tax Code 95-15.4

Chairman McCarthy proposed making a report on the final figures for this year and to send to the proper committees a legislative change in the tax code to authorize the Representative Town Meeting to appoint a new Senior and Disabled Tax Relief Committee in January, 2016. This was approved unanimously.

IV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol J. Way, Secretary